

**Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs
Evan Ryan's Discussion at the National University of Science and
Technology (NUST)**

April 8, 2016

A/S Ryan: Thank you so much. I'm so pleased to be here with all of you today. Arriving on your campus I learned that you all are the premier university herein Pakistan. Is that accurate?

Audience: Yes.

A/S Ryan: I am honored to be your guest and I want to thank Dr. Bhatti for that kind introduction and for agreeing to host this conversation today.

I'm here because we believe strongly in the partnership in terms of education between the United States and Pakistan. That is part of my portfolio, that is what I do at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the Department of State.

We're very pleased with the high level of cooperation between the United States and Pakistan in terms of promoting higher education and specifically Pakistan's recent commitment in contributing to the Fulbright PhD program.

We're also very excited about the evolution of our university partnerships through the Center for Advance Studies and Energy

between NUST, Arizona State University, and University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar.

The substantive cooperation we have with NUST will boost innovation and growth, as will NUST's collaboration with the Department of Commerce on business incubation.

We place high importance upon education and professional exchange as a way to develop the next step generation of Pakistani leaders. Approximately 1,300 Pakistanis travel to the United States each year on U.S. government sponsored exchange programs. We feel that international education prepares students, whether they're from the U.S., Pakistan, or anywhere else around the world, for today's globalized economy. It increases global competitiveness by helping students like you acquire the language skills and global perspectives necessary to succeed in the 21st century.

So I want to encourage all of you to take advantage of some of the programs that we have. For example, the Fulbright program. Are you familiar with the Fulbright program?

Audience: Yes.

A/S Ryan: Okay, good. The Fulbright program. We hope you all are interested in that.

Our global undergraduate exchange program which we call our UGRAD program. They're fantastic exchange programs that Pakistani students can take advantage of.

In particular, I would like to encourage women in the STEM field. The fact that 47 percent of graduate students of Pakistan are women is encouraging, and we hope to see even more women pursuing undergraduate and graduate studies in the science and technologies.

We can maximize our opportunities in higher education by ensuring that universities are connected and that universities and students can avail themselves of classes in on-line and digital format and massive open on-line courses, MOOCs.

I understand that you all are interested in finding out more about the top civil engineering universities in the United States. So in order to learn more you can contact our excellent educational advising service based at the U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan which is based here in Islamabad. They can provide further information tailored to your interests and we have members of the embassy here who can help you connect with them. We call them Education USA.

So now I look forward to our discussion and questions and comments, and thank you all for hosting me. I'm really glad to be here with you today. [Applause].

Moderator: Thank you very much.

As our guest mentioned about the education and exchange programs and offering a number of programs in human resource development, [inaudible] vital to which we get a number of programs which are for research and development, for human resource development, for education, and these all programs manage to have [extensive] ties between Pakistan and U.S., right?

A/S Ryan: That's right.

Moderator: I just give you a little [inaudible] coming from the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, the number of Fulbright scholarships or need-based scholarships. I believe the number of students are beneficial of the need-based scholarships in Pakistan. So for both then 3600 students got benefit from need-based scholarships. And recently we have one big program, that's the Fulbright program, and post doc program, and the other research projects are bilateral projects with the university to university, between institutions and institutions, through the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan around 30, 73 projects are provided by [inaudible] institutions, and 39 have been

completed. And it's a very good [inaudible] research we conducted together between Pakistani researchers and scholars and U.S. scholars.

A/S Ryan: Right.

Moderator: I would like to know about what more things. Could you please enlighten us that why U.S. thinks that it's important to share its own experience and expertise in cultural and education [inaudible].

A/S Ryan: So for many years, about 75 years, the United States State Department has believed that educational and cultural exchanges are very important to our relationships globally. So that's why we invest in these exchange programs.

We believe that when we bring students, scholars, we bring people from all walks of life. We have sports exchange programs, cultural exchange programs. When we bring people from other parts of the world to the United States and when we send people from the United States overseas, it helps us understand one another better. But also what we hope is that through these programs when we host people in the United States, we can share the best that we have to offer in the United States. Share our skills, our ideas, our knowledge, and then you can bring those skills and knowledge based ideas back here to your country. And

that's what we think not only brings us closer together and establishes a bridge between countries, but also helps by sharing information.

You know, the world we live in today is shrinking day by day. Between technology, social media, we're all interconnected and the global market place makes it so that we really depend on one another more than we have ever before. But if we depend on one another, and something that happens in Pakistan affects us in the United States, well it's even more important that we understand one another better, and that we have that connection and that bridge, and that's what exchange programs for us are really about.

Moderator: As I mentioned about the Fulbright, what I know, that the biggest program of Fulbright is in Pakistan.

A/S Ryan: It is. It is. Our biggest Fulbright program is Pakistan. [Applause].

Moderator: Do you think that education is going to be interdependent and how it is linked to society?

A/S Ryan: It is. Today we see that all the time. We know that if you have a strong foundation in education, if you have a society that's invested in education, we know that that will in

turn affect that country and that country's levels of success. But that country's levels of success in all sectors -- economic, security, civil society -- will all depend upon the strength of its educational system. And our hope is that through our own exchange programs it can help enhance education groups, societies all over the world.

Moderator: You mentioned about the women in education, and women in education how it is possible to mobilize economic development while involving the women part, and what you can do for, you know, other countries and Pakistan.

A/S Ryan: Yes. As Dr. Bhatti mentioned, my first job when I graduated from college was working for Hillary Clinton when she was First Lady. So I learned a lot of this from her. And what she used to say if you are not educating women, if you are not involving women in all aspects of society, you as a country are basically tying one hand behind your back. You're putting yourselves at a disadvantage. So we do feel like in order for a country to thrive and succeed you need women to be equal partners in all aspects including in being educated, but also them being able to participate that country's economy, and that in turn will enhance that country's security by having women as full partners.

So we have many of our exchange programs are focused on women's entrepreneurship where we bring women to the United States and

give them the skill sets and the ideas that we've developed in the United States. But we have programs for women across the board as well.

Moderator: The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan came into being in 2002, 2003, and the gender ratio was 23 percent women. But currently the ration of men and women is [inaudible] and now the women is around 47 percent, in our higher education. The number of students who are going to education, are in education, there are more than 1.2 million and 47 percent are women.

A/S Ryan: So that's great progress.

Moderator: Yes, it's good progress I think.

Would you like to share with us the [inaudible] of digital technology [inaudible] IT, is a global [inaudible].

A/S Ryan: Right.

Moderator: How you think that, because you are [inaudible] and advancement of technology.

A/S Ryan: In the United States there's a big investment in our technology sector. There's a lot of interest in Silicon Valley. We have programs actually that we've begun running at the State

Department, exchange programs where we bring exchange participants from around the world to Silicon Valley so that they can actually learn from the best of the best that we have to offer in technology there, and then bring it home to grow your own businesses and focus on innovation back at home.

We do think that that is the core of our exchange programs is trying to find the best of what we have to offer and share it. And as we know and we see every day of our lives and everybody in here is on some form of social media, connecting digitally. I know whenever I speak to university classes you all are connected in that way. We at the State Department have tried to on our own respond [inaudible], and we're quite a quick technologically speaking, but we're trying to get up to speed so that we can actually also connect with people around the world instantaneously and through social media.

So I think in order to be part of the 21st century global marketplace you need to be digitally savvy and you need to be technologically literate, and we hope that in the United States we can share the best of what we have to offer with our exchange participants and through our programs.

Moderator: How do you think that when internet and digital, I used to say everywhere I go, I'd say this planet is [inaudible],

so we are the persons of the planet, not dividing us into the continents and the compartments because we become as one.

A/S Ryan: Yes, and I think that's what technology has done for us.

Moderator: We are a person on the planet. Everybody is a person of the planet and we are like other species, the human species are migrating.

A/S Ryan: It's true.

Moderator: It's the technology which makes it all our personal --

A/S Ryan: It's true. Technology has brought us together in so many different ways. It's really connected all of us in ways that we would not have been connected before. When something happens globally, you know about it instantaneously today due to technology. So in that way it's really brought us closer together, which is why I think Instagrams are more important than ever, because having that human experience of understanding another country and culture will be really important when you're connected technologically and you hear something so rapidly. It's also important that you understand that other country and culture.

I've now been here for two days and I have a much deeper understanding of Pakistan since arriving, and that's because I'm here. So I think it's so important that we connect and engage through that human experience of exchange.

Moderator: [Inaudible] who are here would love to listen for you for any future programs as you mentioned in your introduction. What further program in science, technology and education and culture and in other [inaudible] offered by you.

A/S Ryan: Right. We have many programs. One program that we're very excited about that we'll be launching in the fall of 2017 here in Pakistan is Tech Women. I referenced it a little bit earlier. It's a program where women can apply and work with our embassy to travel to the United States on an exchange program that will bring you to Silicon Valley, and you will be mentored in Silicon Valley at one of the companies, and Silicon Valley it's that [Tech Partner] program, so Google, Yahoo think of any of these big companies. You're there for about five weeks and then you come through Washington before you return home to learn a little bit about our work in the State Department and it's a really wonderful program.

Moderator: And what place you would invite them if somebody wants to come and study in the U.S.?

A/S Ryan: To study in the United States? I would say to use the wonderful resource that we have which is called EducationUSA which I referenced a bit in my remarks which will help guide you about what you need to do in order to study in the United States. So walk you through what tests you need to take how to go about applying, whether there are scholarships available or [inaudible] available. So it's a wonderful resource, so I do encourage you to work with our embassy and take advantage of Education USA.

But I would really encourage all of you to think about study in the United States because it will, I think, help bring Pakistan and the United States closer together, strengthen the ties that we have, help us understand one another, and I hope too, that we can share through our university systems the best of what we have to offer in the United States if you're thinking of going to the United States to study.

Moderator: You are saying you are 48 hours in Pakistan?

A/S Ryan: 48 hours almost exactly.

Moderator: You will be meeting [inaudible] and other. What would you take with you back home that we need support from U.S. in culture, in history, in education? What is interesting that you see that we need [inaudible]?

A/S Ryan: Well that's a good. I'd like to hear from some of our students here. But I will say from my perspective, I've had a wonderful visit so far, and everyone has been very warm and welcoming, and I've been so really inspired by the young Pakistanis who I've met. I've met some of the alumni of our programs, people who have visited the United States and returned, and they have wonderful ideas about the future of Pakistan and what they're going to do with their own career paths and lives, and we think that their time in the United States helped inform them about some, you know, how they want to, what they want to pursue in terms of jobs, and my hope is that we can continue to do that through our exchange partnerships.

But in terms of our work with Pakistan, we're doing so many different things in terms of both exchange programs and programs that the embassy runs. Anything you can think of, I would say, is probably happening right now between the U.S. and Pakistan. And we're excited to continue that partnership.

Moderator: The way and direction you are looking [inaudible].

A/S Ryan: I know.

Moderator: So what would you like to say about these girls, advice to them. You are just looking on this side. They are --

A/S Ryan: They put the podium between me and the women. I don't know why that is. [Laughter].

I would really invite the women in the room here to think about coming on our exchange programs here in the United States, or coming to the United States on an exchange program and I would encourage you, especially if you're here at NUST, I know that you potentially are candidates for our Tech Women Program which we're really excited about. That's the one I just spoke of that's coming to Silicon Valley. And we would love to be able to work with you and host you in the United States. But I would encourage you to think about it.

I know that sometimes as I've traveled the world, sometimes women may or may not be more hesitant to come to the United States, but I know that all the women I've met who have come have had a really amazing experience and I know that it will only I think continue to inspire you in terms of your future work.

Moderator: If anybody would like to ask anything from Evan?

Audience: [Inaudible].

A/S Ryan: Thank you. [Applause].

Audience: I would like to talk about the Global UGRAD program of U.S. government. So I want to ask what is that particular thing that U.S. wants to in some case [inaudible] which is in Pakistan and what is the thing that you want to [inaudible] in our budget that you have in your [inaudible]?

A/S Ryan: That's a really good question. So Global UGRAD or any of the exchange programs that we have, what I hope is that you will come to the United States on Global UGRAD and that the students that you meet and anyone that you meet in the United States, gain a better understanding of Pakistan through you. That to me is a very important part of our exchange programs and it's one we don't speak about enough.

Many people, if you were to come on that program you might be the only Pakistani that they may have met. So you would serve as an ambassador of your country when you come to the United States. And I think it's very important for the overall relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan that that kind of understanding develops.

So that is what I hope when you come to the United States that you're able to bring.

And likewise, when we send students to Pakistan, U.S. students to Pakistan, I hope that the people of Pakistan will gain a better understanding of what the United States is about.

Have any of you studied in the United States? Or been to the United States?

Moderator: Students? Anybody who has been to the U.S.?

A/S Ryan: The reason I ask is I meet with exchange participants all the time, almost every day back in Washington at the State Department, exchange participants who come on our programs. Almost every single one of them is surprised by the United States. It's different than what they imagined. And I think that's very important. I think that's the only way that can happen is if you have that exchange and human experience.

Moderator: Let me share one thing, how they are [inaudible]. I have been to be there for a post doc. It was my second day in the institution where I went. The first thing during introduction, everybody was asking me, do you have a car? I couldn't believe it. This is my second day. They asking a car? Why should I have a car? I said no, I don't have a car, but I have an airplane, because I park at the airport. [Laughter]. I did not get idea.

Soon after when weekend come, then I realized on my God, I do need car because I have to go to market. Such a big town and it's very difficult to go there and buy groceries and all these things. But I am seeing that all the people with whom I worked, more than 200, everybody offered me that Dr. Bhatti when you want a car, just let us know so we will accompany you to go find one, and I did not disappoint anybody. [Laughter]. [Applause].

Because I learned through experience, when they offer car, they offer from heart. And if you said no, it doesn't look nice. So I used to ask them and I divide my own weekends and my tour with my colleagues. I travel around in different parts of the U.S. with my American colleagues. But in return, listen one thing. What I did, I offered them my Pakistani [inaudible] food. [Applause]. This is the way we exchange. We exchange our vegetables, our cooking, this sort of thing.

So when you go to U.S. they will offer you car, and no hesitation. And they will make you and your family so comfortable that you won't believe it.

I was supposed to travel in Mississippi and somebody offered me a car drive to Memphis. Can you believe it? The person said okay, I can take you to Memphis. Then I look at Memphis, Memphis was about four hours drive from [inaudible]. And then he took me,

the gentleman, up to the Memphis from there I went [inaudible].
So this is the beauty of it.

A/S Ryan: Absolutely.

Audience: Ma'am, it's an honor to listen to you, everyone.

Actually I've been following the political developments of the
United States and I [inaudible] --

Moderator: You mean current?

Audience: Yes. Everyone here has agreed that political
development in United States has implications on this entire
region. So for students going to the United States, what would
be the implication on them? The future government, the
government to come. Because I've been hearing like, to be
honest, [inaudible] and we can't understand. [Applause].

A/S Ryan: I will say that there are many people in leadership,
in Congress, my former boss who's also running for President who
vehemently disagrees with that sort of rhetoric. So I think that
we have to see how this plays out. But we are a country that
embraces people from all over the world and we are founded on the
principle of immigration. My ancestors were immigrants from
Ireland, and this is something that I think we need to maintain

if we are to still be a diverse and a multicultural country, and I think that, I'm hopeful that the American people will agree and that that will be the course that is taken. [Applause].

Audience: One small request. You said that we shouldn't just American people based on the rhetoric. I would request you should do the same. [Applause].

A/S Ryan: I totally agree. I agree. Do you feel that Americans do judge some rhetoric that comes out of here? Is that what you're saying?

Audience: What the media says.

A/S Ryan: I don't. I mean the good news is, this is my job. My job is to meet people internationally and the one thing I know for sure is that each individual has their own thoughts and minds and opinions, and actually, I will say coming from the United States we understand that very very well, and I think those of you here who have been to the United States understand that we have a very very vast array of ideas and opinions that can differ greatly. So I understand that that is also the case in other countries around the world. So thank you for that.

Moderator: I would like to invite a last question from a female, because you are 47 percent in education. Anybody would like to ask?

Audience: Hello ma'am, I'm [inaudible] from NUST. I'm doing [inaudible] NUST.

People from [inaudible] that come to NUST, they talk about technology, they talk about entrepreneurship for women. But they never talk about women in [inaudible]. We are minority in that [case] and we are never offered a good position when it comes to Fulbright. So I would like to ask, not ask you, but I would like suggest you, please do some amendment in that as well because women [inaudible] mechanical engineers, they're not given much options. So they are stuck in Pakistan or they're stuck with [inaudible] four years in my country. They don't have much option to apply.

A/S Ryan: I thank you for that. I will very much look at that. I would welcome more women on Fulbrights in general, but also women focused on civil engineering. I think we would very much like that. And I would tell you also that this is a struggle that we also confront in the United States. You hear this a lot when you travel to Silicon Valley and you see that they also are struggling with integrating women into, at the level that they should be. So this is something that we understand well and I

think that Fulbright would be a wonderful help in addressing it, so we will look at that for sure.

Moderator: Ma'am, I have one question. I am [inaudible] back in U.S. So I have heard there are a lot of exchange programs for Pakistani students. What about [American students]? I don't see anyone around in Pakistan.

A/S Ryan: That's an excellent question and it's something that I am working on myself. It's something that I feel strongly and I should start by saying that recently we opened a U.S. Study Abroad office in our Bureau. And we did that because we found that there were not enough U.S. students thinking about studying abroad and looking to study abroad as there should be. When you look at the numbers of U.S. students studying abroad versus the number of international students, who study abroad, our numbers are quite lower. And this I think puts the United States at a disadvantage and so we've been trying to encourage students to look at this more seriously.

And the other piece of that that we're trying to encourage students to look at is the students that are studying abroad, we're asking them to look at other places to go. Not just the traditional places that they tend to go which is you know, Western Europe, but to look beyond Western Europe and to seek study and travel beyond that.

So I know that for U.S. students part of the concern when they think about coming to Pakistan is security and that's something that we look at at the State Department and we try to continually evaluate so that we can give them the opportunity to understand what the real situation is. That's part of the reason that I'm here. I'm eager to go back to the United States and talk about my time in Islamabad, but also at NUST and here with you. But I think it's very important that we have U.S. students choosing to come here to study and I will encourage them to do so.

Moderator: What I encountered a couple of [inaudible] students at [inaudible]. They came here around six, seven years ago and they were doing their dissertation in excavation in [inaudible]. One of the [inaudible] site in Pakistan. So it's just, you know, one-time encounter. Let us know if you see we can help you bring your students.

A/S Ryan: That would be great. We would like that. Thank you.

Moderator: We can help you out.

A/S Ryan: Thank you.

Moderator: Thank you very much.

A/S Ryan: Are there any other questions? I don't want to leave if there are other questions.

Are many of you thinking at all of studying in the United States? We would very much welcome you. Can I ask everyone a question before I go?

Moderator: It's your turn.

A/S Ryan: Okay. I would love to ask questions.

Do any of you have a message for me as I go back to the State Department and Secretary Kerry, is there anything that you want us to be aware of in terms of U.S.-Pakistani relations?

Audience: [Inaudible]. [Laughter].

A/S Ryan: We hear that a lot. [Laughter]. Anything else?

Moderator: Thank you very much, Evan.

Audience: [Inaudible]. [Laughter].

Audience: The United States is [inaudible]. [Inaudible]. I think that being a student of the United States is [inaudible],

and so for that, I want to be an astronaut so [inaudible] United States. [Laughter].

A/S Ryan: So we do have a lot of information on the web site, but I will say, in my job I had to go before Congress and have a hearing so that Congress would approve me as President Obama's nominee for the job. All with the understanding that I would support the idea that exchanges meant people returned home. So I am not allowed to speak about immigration because our whole idea behind public diplomacy is the principle of exchange so that people return home.

But I will say, there's a lot of information on the web.

Moderator: Thank you.

Audience: You asked for message. I have a request actually. You said you have [inaudible] out here. The request is that please when you go to the States, [inaudible] Pakistan here, what you have seen here.

A/S Ryan: I will. I absolutely will. And I look forward to doing that. You've been wonderful to speak to and to meet and I will definitely do that. Thank you, thank you.

Can I take your picture from here? You're such a great audience here. Jordan might help me out. He's better than I am at this. But we'll Tweet this out and I'm new to Instagram so this is why we're trying to do this. Smile.

We will Tweet this out and Instagram this out. And I'm thrilled to be here with all you. Really, you've been so kind. Thank you for having me.

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